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SUBJECT: GREECE: JUNE TIP UPDATE

extradition procedures, provide them psychological help, and reinforce security systems in these countries. The meeting was within the framework of ongoing border cooperation between Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria.

Two arrests for labor trafficking

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¶6. (SBU) A Greek and a Bulgarian national were arrested in the north-central prefecture of Pieria in late June for forcing 11 Bulgarians, including an underage girl, to work as agricultural laborers. The victims, all from the same Bulgarian village, were lured across the border illegally with promises of jobs in tobacco farms for 50 euro a day. Upon arrival, the victims allegedly had their documents taken away and were forced to work in appalling conditions for 14 hours a day seven days a week without food and paid only 10 euro a day. The exploitation was revealed when one worker called a member of his family requesting her to deposit 600 euro in a bank in the name of the Greek owner of the farm in order to be allowed to leave. The victims were helped by volunteers of the European Women's Network, which paid for their hotel expenses for two days and helped with their repatriation to Bulgaria.

NGOs complain of delays in financing from YDAS

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¶7. (SBU) The European Women's Network (ENOW), Klimaka, and the Greek Council for Refugees -- all dynamic NGOs and official partners of the MFA in combating trafficking in persons -- complained to us about delays in receiving funds from the Development Aid Division of the MFA. All three NGOs said cooperation with the Development Aid Division of the MFA was not regularized and, as a result, funds were made available only after very long delays. As a result, Klimaka was forced to close a trafficking victims, shelter in 2007. The NGO argued it could not keep up the shelter, which required regular and substantial resources and manpower to operate. Nickie Roumbani, President of ENOW, alleged that the government shelter EKKA was also at minimal operation level due to delays in receiving committed funds. ENOW and other NGOs expressed admiration for police work but were very critical of other players in combating trafficking in human beings, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have raised with senior levels of the MFA the need for more regular and timely distribution of funds to these NGOs; we have been promised an update on this situation in the near future.

SPECKHARD